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Designing a Suggestion System Model with an Approach to Reducing Organizational Silence: A Meta-Synthesis Study

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ABSTRACT

In today's complex organizational environments, silence is widely recognized as a critical barrier to innovation, productivity, and effective decision-making. This silence often stems from a fear of negative consequences, a lack of trust in leadership, hierarchical organizational cultures, and the absence of transparent and secure communication channels. Employees who refrain from speaking up may do so to avoid conflict, retaliation, or marginalization, which diminishes feedback loops, creativity, and active engagement within organizations. When strategically designed and well-executed, suggestion systems provide a structured, anonymous, and supportive mechanism for capturing employee voice. These systems play a vital role in disrupting the silence cycle and fostering a culture of participation. This study employed a qualitative meta-synthesis method to review and integrate findings from 35 scientific articles focused on organizational silence and employee suggestion systems. Articles were selected using rigorous screening criteria and assessed through CASP to ensure methodological soundness. The analysis revealed that silence arises due to managerial, individual, and cultural causes. It also highlighted how suggestion systems act not merely as feedback tools, but as strategic enablers of organizational learning and adaptive behavior.

Keywords:
Organizational Silence, Suggestion System, Meta-Synthesis Approach, Organizational Culture, Rewarding Suggestions

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Organizational silence is an important concept in organizational behavior and management (Brinsfield & Edwards, 2020; Ghanbari & Beheshti Rad, 2017). In environments where a culture of silence prevails, opportunities for organizational learning and innovation are frequently missed, distrust becomes widespread, and leadership decisions often lack diverse and critical perspectives (Dedahanov et al., 2016).

Recent research has offered deeper insights into the nature of silence in various settings. Zou et al. (2025) identified four types of silence among nurses: defensive, disregardful, acquiescent, and prosocial. They argue that silence is often a psychological and cultural response to perceived risks or systemic barriers. Song and Cho (2025) employed a hierarchical linear model to demonstrate that factors such as organizational size, mentoring systems, intrinsic motivation, and surface acting have a significant influence on different types of silence, particularly in public service environments. Additionally, Mahar et al. (2024) emphasized that transformational leadership, mediated by trust in leadership, significantly reduces organizational silence and promotes proactive voice behavior, especially in resource-limited settings. Collectively, these findings highlight the importance of comprehensive strategies that include leadership development, employee support, and organizational reforms to address the complex nature of workplace silence.

Van Dyne et al. (2003) describe silence as a multidimensional construct comprising acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial types, each driven by distinct motives. These silences differ from mere silence, as they are shaped by contextual factors such as authoritarian leadership and a lack of transparency.

Leaders who react negatively to employee feedback or do not promote open communication can undermine trust and heighten fears of retaliation, ultimately encouraging employee silence (Knoll et al., 2016; Tanhaei et al., 2018). A lack of an inclusive communication climate fostered by managers increases staff anxiety and disengagement (Petrič & Orehek, 2024; Salavatian et al., 2017). At the individual level, concerns such as fear of criticism, worries about negative repercussions, and perceived job insecurity deter employees from voicing their opinions. Additionally, job burnout significantly contributes to silence by diminishing involvement in organizational discussions (Alhojairi et al., 2024; Takhsha et al., 2020). Cultural factors are also crucial. In a closed organizational environment where expressing concerns is neither encouraged nor considered safe, norms of silence are reinforced (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). In such cultures, critique and feedback are often perceived as disloyalty or dissent, thereby perpetuating organizational silence (Dupret, 2019; Yu et al., 2022).

The suggestion system is recognized as an effective management tool for reducing organizational silence by fostering psychological safety—an environment where employees feel safe to share ideas without fearing negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999; Focus HR, 2024). When combined with recognition and rewards, such systems promote participation and encourage open communication across all organizational levels.

By delivering transparent and motivating feedback, such systems have the potential to shift organizational culture from silence to dialogue and open interaction (Sharma et al., 2021). When well-designed, suggestion systems reinforce the perception that employee input is valued and has an impact on shaping organizational decisions (Sarwono & Tao, 2024).

These systems hold significant value in environments characterized by a culture of silence. By guaranteeing confidentiality and reducing the anxiety associated with potential repercussions, employees feel more empowered to express their concerns and ideas (Dupret, 2019; Yu et al., 2022). In organizations that implement digital suggestion platforms, the usability and accessibility of these tools are crucial for their success. Features such as user-friendly designs and options for anonymous submissions help mitigate psychological and procedural obstacles, thereby increasing employee engagement and involvement (Tanhaei et al., 2018).

Necessity of Research

Although organizational silence is widely recognized as a barrier to innovation and participation, existing research often examines it in isolation, either through managerial, individual, or cultural perspectives. Despite scattered references to suggestion systems, few studies have systematically investigated their role as a structured approach to reducing silence. The literature lacks an integrated model that combines psychological safety, participation incentives, and communication mechanisms within suggestion systems.

Additionally, previous findings are fragmented and vary across contexts, providing limited theoretical clarity on how suggestion systems mitigate silence in practice. Consequently, organizational leaders lack practical frameworks for designing and implementing effective voice-enabling structures.

This study addresses this gap by employing a qualitative meta-synthesis approach to synthesize insights from 35 empirical studies. It aims to create a comprehensive conceptual framework that demonstrates how suggestion systems can foster openness, establish trust, and ultimately mitigate organizational silence.

Literature Review

Organizational silence is a complex phenomenon in which employees intentionally withhold opinions, concerns, or suggestions due to fear of negative repercussions, a lack of trust, or organizational norms that discourage dissent (Brinsfield & Edwards, 2020; Dedahanov et al., 2016). This behavior disrupts communication, suppresses innovation, and undermines effective decision-making (Shojaie et al., 2011; Dehkharghani et al., 2022). Research has identified various triggers of silence, including authoritarian leadership (Mehdizadeh et al., 2024), job insecurity (Alhojairi et al., 2024), and rigid hierarchical structures (Erfanian Khanzadeh, 2021).

In contrast, suggestion systems serve as organized management tools that enable employees to share their ideas, feedback, and concerns in a psychologically safe and constructive manner (Afkhami Ardakani et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2021). When these systems are well-designed with features such as confidentiality, constructive feedback, and meaningful rewards, they foster a culture of openness and trust (Edmondson, 1999; Sarwono & Tao, 2024). They not only promote proactive communication but also serve as early warning systems for spotting organizational issues (Dupret, 2019; Yu et al., 2022).

Empirical evidence indicates that well-implemented suggestion systems boost organizational performance, increase employee engagement, and foster a more participatory culture (Buech et al., 2010; Hashemi et al., 2012). They enhance employees' sense of ownership and responsibility, promoting continuous improvement and innovation (Fallah et al., 2014).

Although the benefits of suggestion systems are recognized, most studies have focused only on their effects in specific or limited settings. A thorough synthesis that combines these findings and examines how suggestion systems help reduce organizational silence is missing, underscoring the need for this meta-synthesis.

Recognizing the importance of these two concepts, numerous studies have examined the factors that contribute to organizational silence and how suggestion systems can help mitigate it. However, these studies often look at the two concepts separately or only within limited organizational settings, which results in a fragmented understanding. There is a clear gap in the literature for a unified framework that explains how suggestion systems can systematically reduce silence and boost employee engagement.

This study addresses that gap by conducting a meta-synthesis of Persian and English articles from 2010 to 2024, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Analysis and Review of Persian and English Articles Published Between 2010 and 2024.

Ref.	Research Objective	Methodology	Key Findings
Ghanbari & Beheshti Rad, 2017	Investigate the impact of organizational silence on reducing team collaboration and organizational performance.	Quantitative, Case Study	Organizational silence leads to reduced team performance and decreased organizational productivity.
Salavatian et al., 2017	Identify factors affecting employee organizational silence in the media sector.	Qualitative, Content Analysis	Lack of managerial transparency and fear of criticism were identified as the main factors of organizational silence.
Tanhaei et al., 2018	Provide a model for examining the consequences and antecedents of organizational silence.	Qualitative, Grounded Theory	Organizational silence reduces trust and increases distrust within organizations.
Mehdizadeh et al., 2024	Analyze the phenomenon of organizational silence from employees' perspectives.	Qualitative, Phenomenology	Authoritarian management style and closed organizational climate reinforce employee silence.
Salavati et al., 2014	Investigate the relationship between organizational silence and practical communication components.	Quantitative, Survey	Lack of effective communication leads to the spread of organizational silence.
Afkhami Ardakani et al., 2021	Examine the role of suggestion systems in reducing organizational silence.	Mixed Methods	Suggestion systems reduce organizational silence by creating a safe environment.
Mottahari & Ghaffari, 2015	Identify factors affecting the successful implementation of suggestion systems.	Quantitative, Survey	Rewarding and transparent processes are key factors in the success of suggestion systems.
Bandarkhani & Rafiei, 2010	Analyze the role of creativity training in increasing the effectiveness of suggestion systems.	Quantitative, Quasi-Experimental	Creativity training increases employee participation in suggestion systems.
Hashemi et al., 2012	A comprehensive review of components affecting the productivity of suggestion systems.	Qualitative, Review	Simple design, transparent feedback, and reward provision enhance the efficiency of suggestion systems.
Khourakian et al., 2014	Analyze the role of mental health in using suggestion systems.	Qualitative, Content Analysis	Employee mental health has a direct impact on their participation in suggestion systems.

Ref.	Research Objective	Methodology	Key Findings
Fallah et al., 2014	Investigate the possibility of implementing participatory management through suggestion systems.	Quantitative, Survey	Suggestion systems can lay the groundwork for participatory management in organizations.
Piran Nejad et al., 2017	Identify the challenges of organizational silence in human resource management.	Qualitative, Grounded Theory	Organizational silence leads to reduced transparency and decreased interactions within organizations.
Mahmoudi et al., 2022	Examine the role of suggestion systems in improving organizational transparency.	Quantitative, Survey	The use of suggestion systems enhances organizational transparency and efficiency.
Erfanian Khanzadeh, 2021	Identify the dimensions and components of organizational silence.	Mixed Methods	Managerial, individual, and cultural factors directly impact organizational silence.
Dupret, 2019	Examine organizational silence as a potential for organizational change	Qualitative, Theorizing	Silence can be used as a tool for positive changes in organizations.
Brinsfield & Edwards, 2020	Examine employee voice and organizational silence in organizational behavior.	Review, Theoretical Analysis	Employee silence often stems from power structures and a lack of transparency in organizations.
Dedahanov et al., 2016	Analyze the role of silence as a mediator between organizational factors and stress.	Quantitative, Survey	Organizational silence can significantly increase employee stress levels.
Shojaie et al., 2011	Analyze the infrastructures of organizational silence and provide solutions to reduce it.	Qualitative, Content Analysis	Closed organizational culture and lack of managerial support are the main factors of organizational silence.
Dehkharghani et al., 2022	Review organizational silence and provide research suggestions.	Review, Literature Analysis	More research is needed to understand organizational silence in different environments better.
Yu et al., 2022	Examine the impact of perceived job risk on organizational conflicts.	Quantitative, Survey	Organizational silence can increase conflicts in high-risk environments such as the tourism industry.
Alhojairi et al., 2024	Evaluate the reasons for job silence among nurses.	Qualitative, Case Study	Fear of negative consequences and an unsuitable organizational climate are the main reasons for nurses' silence.
Takhsha et al., 2020	Analyze the effect of workplace ostracism on knowledge-sharing.	Quantitative, Survey	Organizational silence caused by workplace ostracism leads to a reduction in shared knowledge within the organization.
Knoll et al., 2016	Analyze research trends on employee silence and voice in organizations.	Review, Literature Analysis	Research on employee silence and voice is expanding, but requires more comprehensive frameworks.
Ölçer & Coşkun, 2024	Examine the mediating role of organizational silence in the relationship between organizational justice and creativity.	Quantitative, Survey	Organizational silence can link perceived organizational justice and employee creativity.
Buech et al., 2010	Examine employee motivational factors for participating in suggestion systems.	Quantitative, Survey	Rewarding and positive feedback are key motivational factors for employee participation.
Sarwono & Tao, 2024	Examine the effect of evaluation and reward on employee motivation in suggestion systems.	Quantitative, Survey	Transparent evaluation and fair reward increase employee motivation to provide suggestions.
Petrič & Orehek, 2024	Analyze employee silence regarding information security issues in organizations.	Qualitative, Theorizing	Employees often remain silent about security issues due to cultural or managerial reasons.

Ref.	Research Objective	Methodology	Key Findings
Arif et al., 2010	Provide a usability-based evaluation model in suggestion systems	Quantitative, Survey	The user-friendly and straightforward design of suggestion systems increases productivity and employee participation.
Otsupius, 2019	Examine the effects of employee silence on organizational effectiveness.	Qualitative, Review	Organizational silence can lead to a reduction in organizational effectiveness in the dimensions of innovation and decision-making.
Heshmatzadeh & Malekiha, 2024	Analyze the effect of narcissistic leadership on employee cynicism and the mediating role of organizational silence.	Quantitative, Survey	Narcissistic leadership leads to increased employee cynicism and organizational silence.
Shafiee Sarvestani et al., 2017	Examine the relationship between teachers' organizational silence and organizational memory.	Quantitative, Survey	Organizational silence can lead to a reduction in collective memory and teacher interactions.
Sharma et al., 2021	Provide new approaches for designing suggestion systems.	Review, Theoretical	Advanced digital systems can improve employee engagement and reduce organizational silence.
Zou et al., 2025	Explore the experiences and root causes of organizational silence among nurses.	Qualitative, Meta-synthesis	Psychological safety, hierarchical culture, and lack of team support drive nurse silence.
Song & Cho, 2025	Examine individual and organizational determinants of four types of employee silence.	Quantitative, Multilevel Statistical Analysis	Autonomy and intrinsic motivation reduce silence; mentoring systems also help. Organizational size increases some types of silence.
Mahar et al., 2024	Investigate how transformational leadership reduces organizational silence and the mediating role of trust.	Quantitative, Structural Equation Modeling (SmartPLS)	Transformational leadership reduces silence directly and indirectly through trust in leadership.

The literature review highlights that addressing organizational silence necessitates a holistic strategy considering managerial, individual, and cultural elements. Organizations can boost interactions, improve productivity, and promote innovation by incorporating these elements into a well-organized suggestion system. Ultimately, this will establish an open and transparent organizational culture, enabling effective responses to future challenges.

Method

This research employs the qualitative meta-synthesis method to integrate findings from previous studies. Meta-synthesis is a qualitative research approach that facilitates the development of theoretical frameworks and comprehensive models by systematically combining and analyzing the results of earlier research (Hoon, 2013). This article employed this method to extract and synthesize the factors influencing organizational silence and the role of the suggestion system in mitigating it, drawing on 35 reviewed articles.

We utilized the meta-synthesis method for three reasons. First, its comprehensive approach enabled the collection and integration of findings from various articles, providing a complete understanding of organizational silence and the suggestion system. Second, the method offers a structured format to support a systematic data analysis through clearly defined steps. Lastly, it facilitated the creation of a theoretical framework to outline a conceptual model grounded in the data from the articles. To implement this approach, the research was conducted in several

key stages, starting with the formulation of research questions and identifying relevant literature.

Defining the Research Question

In this stage, the research objective and its central questions are defined. The research questions of this article include the following:

- What are the factors affecting organizational silence?
- How can a suggestion system reduce organizational silence?

This stage provides the foundation for all subsequent stages.

Searching for Relevant Articles

Relevant articles were retrieved from Scopus, Google Scholar, Springer, and SID databases using the search terms "organizational silence" and "suggestion systems." An initial pool of 78 articles was identified. The inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Empirical peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2010 and 2024
- Qualitative or mixed-methods studies that directly addressed at least one of the core research questions
- Articles published in English or Persian with full-text access
- Conceptual papers, book chapters, dissertations, and conference proceedings were excluded to ensure methodological consistency and data quality across sources

After screening based on these criteria, 35 articles were selected for final analysis.

Screening Articles

The retrieved articles were screened based on the following criteria:

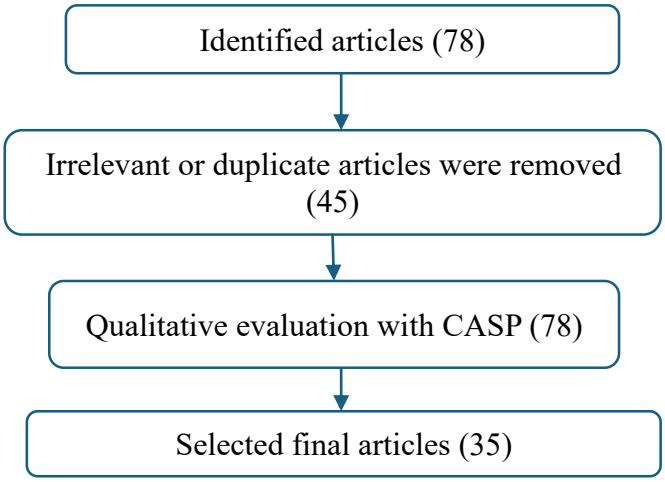
- **Topical relevance:** Articles had to directly address organizational silence or suggestion systems in organizational contexts.
- **Research quality, validity, and reliability:** Only studies with clearly defined objectives, appropriate qualitative or mixed-method designs (e.g., case studies, interviews, thematic analysis), and transparent data collection and analysis procedures were included. Methodological quality was assessed using adapted criteria from the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP), including clarity of research questions, sampling logic, ethical considerations, and coherence between data and interpretation. Reliability was evaluated based on evidence of consistent coding procedures, use of triangulation, audit trails, or researcher reflexivity, where applicable.
  Studies were excluded if they lacked methodological transparency (e.g., no explanation of data sources, unclear analysis methods), relied solely on anecdotal or opinion-based narratives, or did not report participant data or analytical steps. For example, conceptual essays, editorial commentaries, and qualitative papers with vague descriptions of coding processes were not considered valid or reliable for inclusion.
- **Publication date:** Only articles published between 2010 and 2024 were reviewed.

After screening, 35 final articles were selected for analysis.

Figure 1 displays the article screening process. Figure 1 would initially include the Initial search to identify 78 articles, followed by the removal of 45 irrelevant or duplicate articles.

Were removed. Finally, the articles were qualitatively evaluated using the CASP tool, resulting in the final selection of 35 articles.

Figure 1
Flowchart of Article Screening


Identified articles (78)
Irrelevant or duplicate articles were removed (45)
Qualitative evaluation with CASP (78)
Selected final articles (35)

To evaluate the research using the CASP[1] With a checklist, the quality of the articles can be systematically examined. This checklist includes criteria that help us assess qualitative and quantitative studies. We also used Cronbach's alpha and Cohen's kappa index to evaluate the reliability of the extracted codes. Cronbach's alpha is a tool for measuring the internal consistency of data. This study calculated Cronbach's alpha for the extracted codes from the articles, which was .89. This value indicates the outstanding reliability of the extracted codes. Values above .7 usually indicate good internal consistency, and .89 indicates strong reliability.

Cohen's kappa index, equal to .85, was also used to examine inter-coder agreement in data analysis. This value indicates very high agreement between coders. Cohen's kappa has values between (-1) and (+1); values above .8 indicate excellent agreement.

Concept Coding

Concept coding in qualitative research, such as meta-synthesis, is a process in which data or textual information (e.g., article findings) are divided into smaller meaningful components, and these components are placed into specific categories based on semantic similarities and differences. This process helps the researcher identify hidden structures and patterns within the data.

The meta-synthesis method begins by extracting initial codes from relevant studies, which are then organized through axial coding. The final codes become the primary output of the research. During the first stage, we conduct open coding; initial codes are drawn directly from the articles' texts. These codes reflect fundamental concepts that are directly taken from the reviewed articles, representing recurring themes and findings in studies on organizational silence and suggestion systems.

Steps for extracting initial codes:

[1] Critical Appraisal Skills Programme

1. **Careful reading of articles:** Each article was read thoroughly, and sections that referred to organizational silence or suggestion systems were identified.
2. **Identifying key phrases:** Phrases such as "fear of criticism," "lack of transparency," and "closed organizational culture" were recorded as initial codes.
3. **Recording codes:** The extracted codes were recorded in a table for each article, and ultimately, 80 initial codes were identified.

For brevity, 20 codes are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Initial coding of concepts

Code Number	Initial Code Title	Description	Frequency
1	Fear of Criticism	Employees worry about negative feedback from managers.	15
2	Closed Organizational Climate	Inability to express opinions freely.	12
3	Lack of Transparency in Decision-Making	Absence of clarity in processes and policies.	18
4	Concern about Negative Consequences	Fear of the potential consequences of expressing opinions.	10
5	Lack of Feedback System	No effective system for providing feedback.	14
6	Authoritarian Leadership Style	Managers create silence through dictatorial behavior.	11
7	Job Insecurity	Employees fear losing their jobs.	9
8	Lack of Organizational Trust	Absence of trust between managers and employees.	13
9	Lack of Incentive Rewards	Employees do not receive rewards for their suggestions.	10
10	Hierarchical Culture	An organizational culture where ideas do not flow from bottom to top.	8
11	Lack of Manager-Employee Interaction	Managers do not provide enough opportunities for interaction.	12
12	Lack of Proper Training	Employees are not trained to use the suggestion system.	7
13	Resource Constraints	There is a shortage of financial and human resources to implement the suggestion system.	6
14	Distrust in the System	Employees do not trust the effectiveness of the suggestion system.	9
15	Fear of Change	Fear of changes resulting from the proposed suggestions.	11
16	Lack of Individual Motivation	Employees do not feel motivated to participate.	7

Code Number	Initial Code Title	Description	Frequency
17	Weak Communication	Lack of effective communication channels in the organization.	13
18	Weak Leadership	The inability of management to create transparent communication.	10
19	Policy Inconsistencies	The presence of contradictory policies in the organization.	5
20	Lack of Data Analysis	The organization does not utilize data analysis for suggestions.	6

In the second stage of the meta-synthesis method, we have axial coding (See Table 3). Axial codes are derived from the combination and grouping of initial codes. These codes represent the main categories of research concepts and help identify relationships between factors. The stages of forming axial codes begin with examining semantic similarities, where similar initial codes are grouped based on common meanings. Then, the main categories are formed. Here, the initial codes were placed into three general categories:

- Managerial factors: Factors related to leadership style and managers' behavior.
- Individual factors are factors related to employees' personality traits and attitudes.
- Cultural factors: Factors related to the overall climate and organizational culture.

Finally, we have category validation, where each category is reviewed and confirmed.

Table 3

Axial Coding of Concepts

Category	Core Code	Description	Frequency
Managerial Factors	Authoritarian Leadership Style	Managers who restrict employees and reinforce organizational silence.	30
Managerial Factors	Lack of Transparency	The inability to provide clear information and explanations reduces employee trust.	25
Managerial Factors	Frequent Negative Feedback	Managers who constantly criticize employees contribute to their silence.	28
Individual Factors	Fear of Criticism	Employees avoid expressing their ideas due to concerns about negative consequences.	20
Individual Factors	Concern about Negative Consequences	Fear of the potential consequences of expressing opinions.	18
Individual Factors	Job Insecurity	A sense of job insecurity increases silent behavior.	15
Cultural Factors	Closed Organizational Climate	Organizations with a non-transparent and closed atmosphere encourage employee silence.	22
Cultural Factors	Hierarchical Culture	A structure where ideas only flow from top to bottom.	20
Cultural Factors	Resistance to Change	A negative attitude toward organizational changes.	16

In the third stage of concept coding, we have the final codes (See Table 4). The final codes are the result of the coding process and form the conceptual framework of the research. These

codes represent the main factors affecting organizational silence and the role of the suggestion system in reducing it.

The final codes result from the coding process and form the research's conceptual framework. These codes represent the main factors affecting organizational silence and the role of the suggestion system in reducing it.

Steps for forming the final codes:

- **Aggregation of axial codes:** Axial codes were merged based on research objectives and the main effects identified in the managerial, individual, and cultural categories.
- **Final review:** The final codes were reviewed to ensure that all essential concepts were covered.
- **Formation of the conceptual framework:** The final codes were placed within the research's final conceptual framework.

In this stage, the axial codes were reduced to 10 principal codes.

Table 4

Final Coding of Concepts

Final Code Number	Final Code Title	Description	Frequency
1	Leadership Style	The impact of leadership on fostering or reducing organizational silence.	60
2	Decision-Making Transparency	The importance of clarity in processes and decision-making.	50
3	Open Culture	Encouraging interaction and expression of opinions without fear.	45
4	Suggestion System	A tool for reducing silence and enhancing participation.	55
5	Organizational Trust	The role of trust in reducing communication barriers.	40
6	Incentive Rewards	The impact of incentives and rewards on increasing engagement.	35
7	Employee Training	The importance of training employees to participate in the system.	25
8	Human and Financial Resources	Strengthening resources to support the suggestion system.	30
9	Data Analysis	Utilizing suggestion data for decision-making.	20
10	Effective Communication	Establishing transparent communication channels between managers and employees.	30

The results of the meta-synthesis method in this article can be examined from several perspectives. First, the factors affecting organizational silence include a managerial aspect, encompassing authoritarian leadership styles, lack of transparency, and absence of positive feedback; an individual aspect, including fear of criticism, concern about job security, and stress—additionally, a cultural aspect, including a closed climate and lack of free space for expressing opinions. Second, the role of the suggestion system is to create a safe space for

expressing ideas, strengthen transparency in the organization, and increase employee motivation with appropriate rewards. Finally, the proposed theoretical framework is presented in Figure 2.

Discussion and Conceptual Framework

The findings of this meta-synthesis show that a mix of managerial, individual, and cultural factors influences organizational silence. Authoritarian leadership, a lack of psychological safety, and ineffective communication systems consistently emerge as major contributors to silence across studies. This supports earlier research (e.g., Dedahanov et al., 2016; Edmondson, 1999) while providing new insights into how suggestion systems can act as a corrective mechanism.

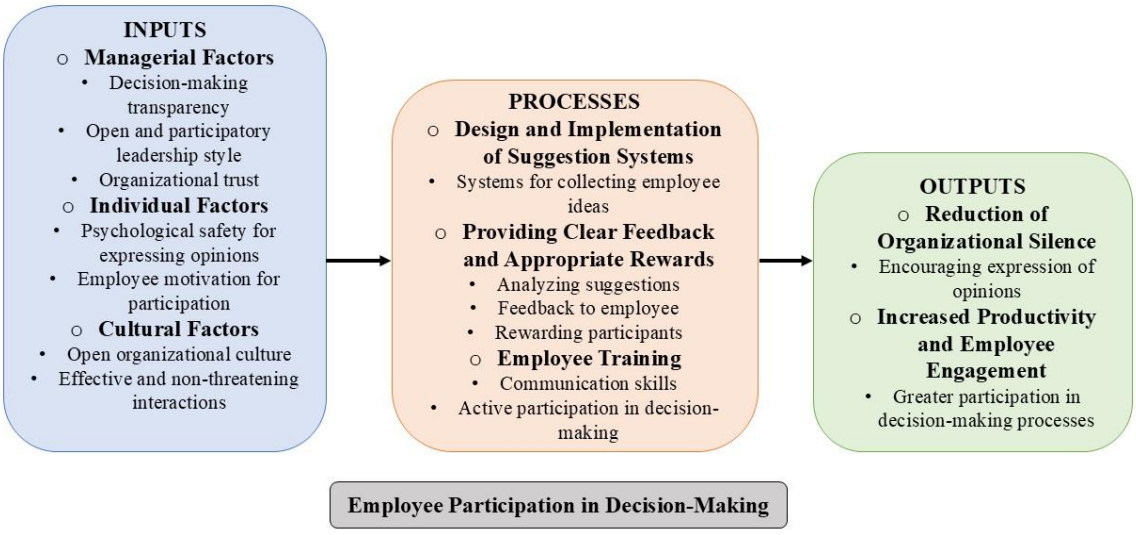
Unlike many previous studies, this synthesis allows managers and policymakers to create participatory environments where employees feel safe to speak, examine, and suggest systems separately, and it emphasizes their interactive dynamics. It demonstrates that suggestion systems—when equipped with clear communication channels, constructive feedback, recognition mechanisms, and trust-building efforts—can decrease defensive and acquiescent silence, and even turn silence into constructive voice behavior.

Practically, this framework enables managers and policymakers to create participatory environments where employees feel safe speaking up. Theoretically, it helps develop a more comprehensive understanding of how structural and psychological mechanisms work together to influence employee silence.

Based on these insights, the conceptual framework developed in this study includes three main dimensions: inputs, processes, and outputs. It explains how contextual and organizational factors contribute to a system of suggestion and feedback, ultimately affecting employee participation and reducing silence.

Figure 2

Proposed Framework for Reducing Organizational Silence



Based on Figure 2, it can be said that the benefits of identifying factors affecting

organizational silence are that organizations can modify their management practices and policies to prevent this problem. Also, as a management tool, the suggestion system can help strengthen employee trust and encourage them to provide feedback and participate more in decision-making. The expected outcomes of this framework include reducing employee silence behaviors and improving their interaction and job satisfaction.

In conclusion, the meta-synthesis approach discussed here effectively pinpointed the contributors to organizational silence and highlighted how a suggestion system can mitigate this issue. By synthesizing qualitative data from diverse sources, this method offered a unified theoretical framework to assist managers in fostering employee participation and diminishing silence.

Conclusion

Organizational silence remains a significant challenge that hinders innovation, reduces productivity, and weakens decision-making effectiveness. This research reviews a wide range of studies, emphasizing the complex nature of silence influenced by managerial actions, individual psychological factors, and organizational culture. Fear of punishment, lack of openness, hierarchical obstacles, and emotional disconnect all work together to prevent employees from speaking up or sharing ideas.

Against this context, suggestion systems act as a structured and proactive way to break the cycle of silence. By creating a psychologically safe environment where employees feel free to share input without fear of negative consequences, these systems play a transformative role in encouraging open communication. When supported by mechanisms such as constructive feedback, fair recognition, and transparent processes, suggestion systems not only reduce silence but also foster engagement, trust, and effective group problem-solving.

The conceptual model developed in this study provides an integrated view of how suggestion systems interact with organizational dynamics to promote voice behavior. Instead of treating silence and participation as separate phenomena, the framework places them within a continuous, systemic process. This approach provides both theoretical clarity and practical guidance for organizations seeking to cultivate a participatory culture and enhance their organizational responsiveness. In doing so, it advances the understanding of how voice-enabling structures can reshape the social fabric of the workplace.

Suggestions for Future Research

Considering the limitations of this research, future studies should explore how varying organizational cultures influence employee silence and assess whether certain cultural traits significantly affect organizational silence. Additionally, further investigation into how new technologies impact suggestion systems could provide insights into effective strategies for minimizing organizational silence. Lastly, conducting empirical studies on the effects of these systems in organizations of different sizes can contribute to a broader understanding of how suggestion systems can reduce silence and enhance overall organizational performance.

Suggestions for Managers

Managers play a fundamental role in reducing organizational silence and strengthening a participatory culture. As a serious obstacle to productivity and innovation, organizational

silence requires targeted management approaches. Using suggestion systems to create a safe and transparent space can improve intra-organizational communications.

The suggestions presented in this section provide scientific and practical solutions based on research findings to reduce organizational silence and increase employee engagement. These recommendations focus on transparency, constructive feedback, and strengthening employee motivation.

- Creating an open and transparent culture to strengthen trust and transparency.
- Designing effective and fair reward systems to appreciate employee suggestions.
- Enhancing managers' communication skills and providing appropriate positive and constructive feedback opportunities.

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Declaration of Conflict

The authors declare no conflict of interest.